

Kintanar widow confirms filing case vs Sison in Netherlands

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MANILA, Philippines — The widow of former New People's Army (NPA) chief Romulo Kintanar confirmed Wednesday she filed charges against communist leader Jose Maria Sison in the Netherlands.

In a text message to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Gloria "Joy" Kintanar said she filed the murder charges that became the basis for the arrest of Sison in the central town of Utrecht.

"Yes I did," Kintanar said, adding she would fly to the Netherlands to testify in the trial "if needed."

Sison, founding chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the NPA, was arrested Tuesday on charges of "giving orders from the Netherlands to murder" Kintanar and Arturo Tabara.

According to Dutch prosecutors, Sison ordered the assassination of Kintanar on January 23, 2003. Kintanar was shot dead in a Japanese restaurant in Quezon City.

The communist rebels owned up to the murder of Kintanar for his alleged crimes against the "revolution and the people."

Dutch authorities also said Sison was behind the murders of Tabara and his son-in-law Stephen Ong on September 26, 2006. Tabara, former member of the highest command of the NPA, was branded by the communist rebels as a "seasoned criminal and fanatic contra-revolutionist."

Kintanar and Tabara led a faction that broke away from the CPP in the early 1990s.

Kintanar was commander of the NPA in the 1980s to the early 1990s, shortly before the bitter split in the communist movement with loyalists to Sison on one side and those opposed to Sison's leadership on another.

Those opposed to Sison's leadership, called "rejectionists" or "RJs," wanted the party to revise its Maoist warfare strategy of surrounding the cities from the countryside to seize power.

Some time in the early 1990s, Sison issued a party directive ordering cadres to "re-affirm" its basic principles in light of leaders who questioned party guidelines. They are known as "reaffirmists" or "RAs."

Tabara's widow 'overjoyed' by Joma Sison's arrest

By Carla Gomez

Visayas Bureau

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BACOLOD CITY — The widow of slain rebel leader Arturo Tabara said she was “overjoyed” by the arrest of the Communist Party of the Philippines founder, Jose Ma. Sison, in The Netherlands.

Veronica Tabara said the arrest of Sison and his trial in The Hague were the first steps in her “long and difficult quest” for justice for her husband and the “hundreds of others” whom Sison allegedly ordered assassinated over the years.

“I hope Sison, who has seemed untouchable for so long, will finally be punished for the deaths of my husband and so many others,” Tabara, 53, said in a phone interview Saturday night.

But she stressed that she acknowledged Sison's right to due process offered under the liberal democratic system of The Netherlands.

Sison, who has been on self-exile in The Netherlands since 1987, was arrested Tuesday in his residence in the town of Utrecht for allegedly ordering the assassinations in Metro Manila of his erstwhile comrades in the CPP-New People's Army (NPA), Arturo Tabara and Romulo Kintanar. He was later brought to The Hague, the Dutch capital.

Mrs. Tabara along with Joy Kintanar, widow of Romulo Kintanar, filed the charges against Sison in The Hague for allegedly ordering the murders of their husbands.

Arturo Tabara, 53, chairman of the breakaway Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade, and his son-in-law Stephen Ong, were shot dead by New People's Army hitmen in Fairview, Quezon City, on Sept. 26, 2004.

Kintanar was assassinated the year before in 2003.

Tabara and Kintanar broke away from the CPP-NPA in 1992 over ideological differences with Sison.

They formed the RPA-ABB in 1998 and entered into a peace agreement with the government under the administration of President Joseph Estrada in 2000.

Mrs. Tabara, who remained a top leader of the RPA-ABB now based in Manila, said her husband, Kintanar and many of their comrades became disillusioned with the Stalinist approach of Sison that saw violence as an option for change.

Mrs. Tabara said she and Mrs. Kintanar filed the charges against Sison in 2006 in The Netherlands with help from the Department of Justice, because they did not have the resources to do it on their own.

Mrs. Tabara said she did not announce the filing of charges against Sison so that the case would not be exploited for political purposes. She said she remained critical of the way the country was being governed even if she accepted help from the DOJ in pursuing the case against Sison.

“Sison has been mainly responsible for ordering the elimination of those who have opposed his

leadership," Mrs. Tabara claimed.

She said it was also "hypocritical for the CPP-NPA to invoke human rights violations, when they have actively violated and failed to respect the basic rights of others."

She maintained that the CPP-NPA under Sison's stewardship, "imposed their ideology on others and eliminated those who have disagreed with them."

"They say they are a movement that represent the interest of the people but they do not respect the rights of those who do not agree with them," Mrs. Tabara said.

Mrs. Tabara said she and her husband knew their lives were in danger the moment they broke away from the CPP-NPA leadership.

She said she was still taking security precautions.

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